



**THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
STRATEGIC PLAN**

MARCH 2023

Five-Year Strategic Plan (2023-2028)



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF

Parks & Recreation

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I. INTRODUCTION

Message from the

DIRECTOR



Dear Los Angeles County,

I am pleased to share with you the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation Five-Year (2023-2028) Strategic Plan (Plan). This Plan outlines our commitment to equity, the communities we serve, our staff and our responsibility as stewards of LA County parks, open spaces, natural areas, wildlife sanctuaries, trails, lakes and its biodiversity.

Over the past two years, LA County Parks has worked alongside partners, community members, stakeholders, County Departments and park and recreation organizations across the nation to develop a meaningful and bold plan for LA County Park's future. The Plan goals aim to deepen connection with our communities; increase equity and access to innovative park space; provide stewardship of public lands, resources, and urban forestry; support our staff; and advance organizational excellence. This Plan is our north star, guiding our path and work as a world-class park and recreation organization committed to park sustainability, equity, and access for all.

The strategies and actions of this Plan outline critical steps and reflect our priorities to further the health and wellness of our communities, particularly historically underserved communities, First Peoples and communities of color. This Plan affirms and centers our work on equity and provides a roadmap to address the significant park and recreation needs in Los Angeles County.

The Plan Goals, Strategies, and Actions were developed with extensive engagement and an anti-racism, diversity, and inclusion focused framework. This Plan affirms the commitment to prioritizing funding and staffing for programming and park access initiatives that redress social, racial, gender-based, and environmental injustice in our communities of need. As one of the most dynamic park organizations in the nation, it is our responsibility to chart the future. I hope you will join me on this journey to create a greener, sustainable, thriving Los Angeles County park system that is centered in equity, well-being and access for all.

Finally, I want to thank our staff, stakeholders, advocates and park goers for your contribution to this Plan and your love for LA County Parks. On behalf of the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, I welcome you to explore our Five-Year Strategic Plan and look forward to seeing you at a LA County Park!

Be well,

Norma Edith García-Gonzalez, Director
County of Los Angeles Department of Parks & Recreation
Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

Hilda L. Solis, 1st District
Holly J. Mitchell, 2nd District
Lindsey P. Horvath, 3rd District
Janice Hahn, 4th District
Kathryn Barger, 5th District

Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Commission

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Second District – Tamika L. Butler
Third District – Kurt Cabrera-Miller
Fourth District – Melissa Balocca
Fifth District – Deanne Boublis

Los Angeles County Partners

LA County Chief Executive Office
LA County Chief Sustainability Office
LA County Department of Public Health
LA County Department of Regional Planning
LA County Public Library
LA County Women and Girls Initiative

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Mona Park Spring Jubilee

Stakeholders and Partners

Active SGV
AYSO 1031
Chrysalis
Community Development Technologies Center
Conservation Corps of Long Beach
East Bay Regional Park District
Hollywood Indies
King County Parks
LA Conservation Corps
LA84 Foundation
Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy
Los Angeles City Department of Recreations and Parks
Quartz Hill AYSO
Rowland Pony Baseball
Santa Clarita Youth Baseball
Women and Girls Initiative

Members of the Park Equity Alliance:

Asian Pacific Islander Forward Movement
Communities for a Better Environment
Pacoima Beautiful
Promesa Boyle Heights
The Trust for Public Land
The Wilderness Society
Willowbrook Inclusion Network.
Prevention Institute
Public Health Advocates
Shields for Families
Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE)
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Katherine Padilla and Associates
And every single LA County resident who enjoys our parks!

WHY PARKS ARE ESSENTIAL

Everyone benefits from parks. Parks offer opportunities for all people to play, relax, meet their neighbors, and enjoy nature. They strengthen a community's social cohesion, public health outcomes, and climate resiliency.

This begins with easy and available park access for all. Park access makes neighborhoods more attractive places to live and work. Park access connects us to a community hub with services that support a thriving neighborhood. Park access brings communities together and encourages interactions that break down barriers between diverse groups.

Park access also improves our public health outcomes. Research demonstrates that park access promotes a more active lifestyle, decreases chronic illnesses, and reduces doctors' visits and healthcare costs⁸. The COVID-19 pandemic only accentuated the importance of these health and social benefits. During that time, people across the world turned to their parks like never before—for fresh air, exercise, solace, and a much-needed break from the stresses of a quickly changing world. Park access simply means a better, healthier world for everyone.

The power of parks extends into improving the well-being of the planet we share. As we wrestle with the threats of the climate crisis, parks and green spaces have a significant role to play in securing our future. Our parks sustain the biodiversity that we as a species need to survive. Park space provides substantial habitat supporting a variety of animal species and native landscape improving drought tolerance. Parks and green spaces are essential to our communities' climate resiliency and adaptation, helping to mitigate air pollution, reduce heat, and protect our public infrastructure. Implementing green infrastructure measures at parks contributes to improved air and water quality and provides stormwater capture benefits. During extreme heat events, residents can find aid in park cooling and aquatic centers. Park space has the power to lower air temperature and absorb floodwater. This is especially important for disadvantaged communities, whose populations are most at risk of the effects of extreme heat and flooding.

Simply put, parks make life better. That is why we do what we do. This plan – the LA County Department of Parks and Recreation Five-Year Strategic Plan (2023-2028) – is how we get there.

WHY PREPARE A STRATEGIC PLAN?

This Strategic Plan will help achieve our Department's bold vision as a world-class parks and recreation organization. It guides our direction, decision-making, and growth for the next five years. The Plan sets forth a course of action for both our internal improvements and our external work across Los Angeles County. It also sets benchmarks to track our progress and ensure we are meeting our goals.





WHY PREPARE THIS PLAN NOW?

The County of Los Angeles is a rapidly changing, dynamic region, requiring recreation, programming, and services that adapt to those changes. Between 2010 and 2020, our County has grown older. The 65+ age group is growing faster than all other age groups, increasing by 3%.⁹ In that same time frame, the population continued to diversify.¹⁰ County residents also experienced a dramatic increase in their cost of living, and in turn, increased housing insecurity and homelessness. Between 2019 and 2020, a 13% increase in median rental prices far outpaced a 4% growth in the County's household median income.¹¹

However, we cannot meet these changing needs without improving parks and park access for the County's vulnerable populations. Historically, our parks have been distributed inequitably due to racist and unjust policy decisions. Over 50% of the County's residents live in high park need areas, meaning over five million residents need improved park space and access.¹³ Crucially, 82% of these high park need areas are located in communities of color.¹⁴ Increasing park access and tree canopy in these areas will also drastically improve health outcomes for Black and Brown communities.¹⁵ According to one study, increased park acreage in high-need LA County census tracts could produce a life expectancy boost of 164,700 years spread across the population – 71% of that increase would directly benefit life expectancies in Black and Latino communities.¹⁶

To meet these shifts in economic and demographic changes, our Department has developed a visionary Strategic Plan that responds to and supports the County's most vulnerable populations through improved park access, recreational programming, and other services that adapt to the region's changing needs. We are equitably distributing our resources for programming, infrastructure, and services. Our team is identifying new community needs by regularly collaborating on programming and planning with residents and over one thousand community-based organizations. Our low and no-cost recreation programs and facility access help alleviate the rising cost of living in low-income communities. We are addressing our changing climate by deploying nature-based climate mitigation solutions, increasing tree canopy, and creating supportive facilities like cooling centers to address the effects of extreme heat. By working hand-in-hand with communities and leading with equity, our Strategic Plan's outcomes will improve the lives of residents across LA County for years to come.

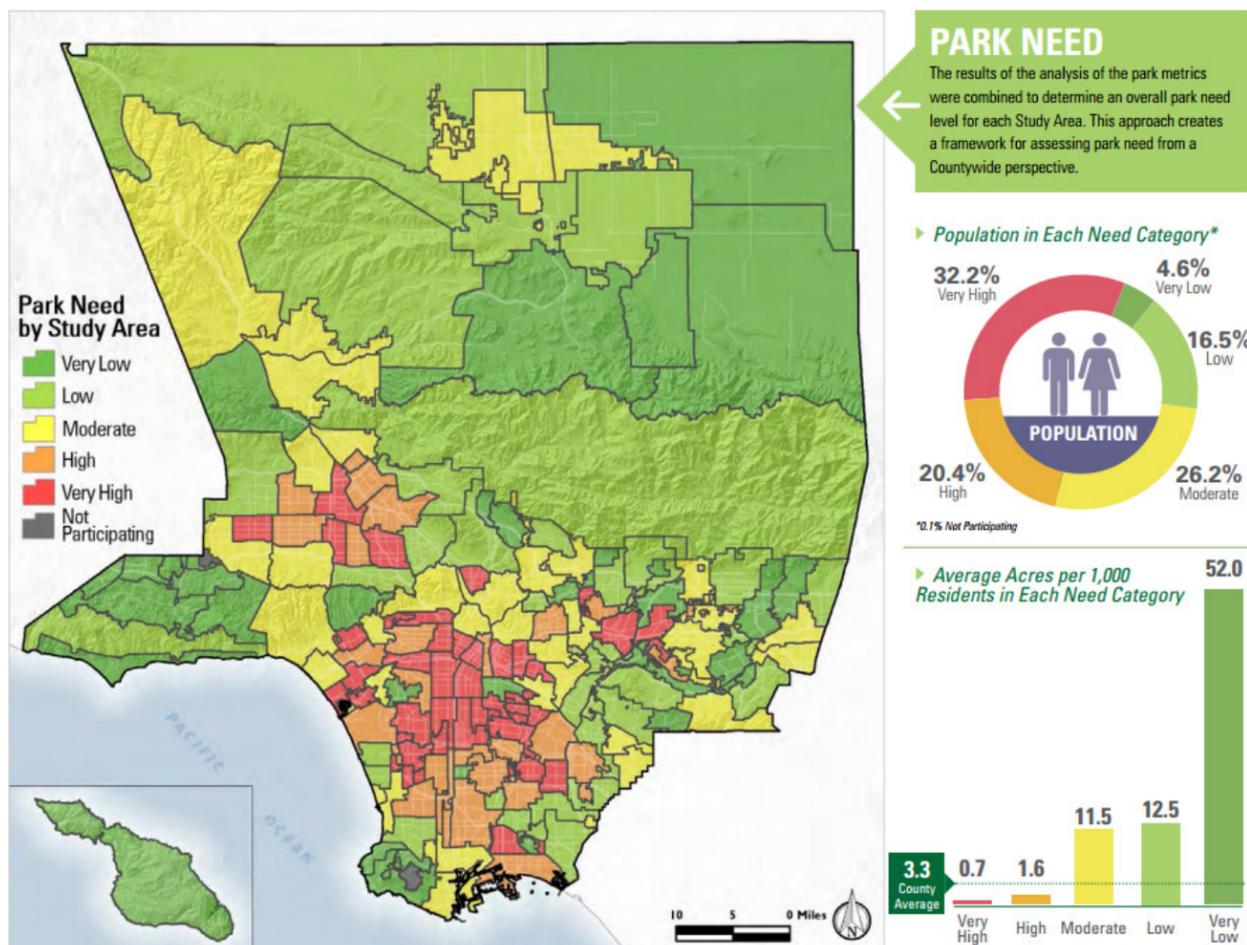
OUR NORTH STAR

Serving the Most Diverse County in the nation

We also develop and deliver culturally relevant programming for the most diverse County in the nation. In 2020, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) made up 73% of the County’s population. This population share is likely to increase in the coming years, as youth of color make up 83% of persons under eighteen. We support these groups through recreation, cultural, and workforce programs that address racial, economic, gender, and sexual identity inequities across the County. Programs like “Our Spot” offers free after-school programming for teens and are rooted in restorative justice principles. Our Lifeguard Ready Training program is expanding our entry-level workforce’s diversity by providing free training and a pathway to full-time employment for BIPOC youth and young adults. Our Healthy Parks Program addresses inequitable public health outcomes by developing Health and Wellness programs that serve unique community needs. These programs, and many others, are delivering much-needed services and connections in communities that have been subject to historic disinvestment.

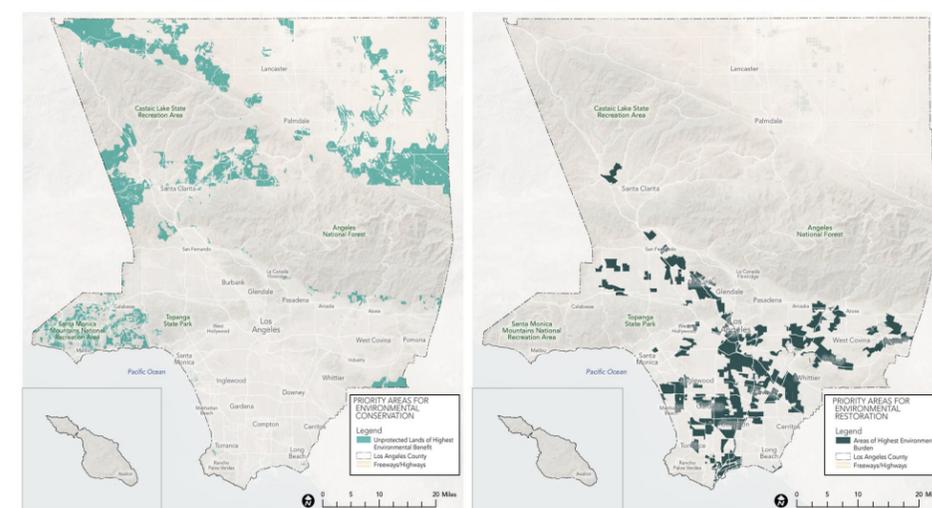
We are dedicated to improving park access countywide through an equitable allocation of resources. The 2016 Parks Needs Assessment (PNA) and 2022 Parks Needs Assessment+ (PNA+) provides a needs-based framework for our future park investments and land conservation. The PNA’s needs-based framework ensures that funding is prioritized for the communities most in need of the public health, community cohesion, and climate resiliency benefits parks offer

The PNA+ identifies priority areas for environmental conservation and restoration which form the basis for a 30x30 strategy for Los Angeles County. This strategy reimagines conservation through an equity lens to include both traditional efforts that involve the protection of natural lands and the restoration of degraded lands, especially in lower-income communities of color where vulnerable populations and environmental burdens are concentrated. Priority areas for environmental conservation are those that offer the most environmental benefits as measured by species diversity, significant habitat, habitat connectivity, proximity to a waterbody, and habitat type. Examples of these areas include portions of the Antelope Valley, Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor, San Gabriel Mountains, Santa Monica Mountains, and Santa Clarita Valley which are not currently owned and managed by public agencies and conservancies. Priority areas for environmental restoration are those that have the most environmental burdens with respect to groundwater threat, hazardous waste, poor air and water quality, and pollution burden. Examples include oil fields (such as the Inglewood Oil Field in Baldwin Hills), brownfields, landfills (such as the Puente Hills Landfill), and other degraded lands which may be converted to parks and open space in the future.



High and Very High Need

The findings of the 2016 study showed that over half of the County’s population lives in an area designated as “High Need” or Very High Need,” determined by factors of available park acreage, walkable access, and park size relative to population density.



HOW TO USE THIS PLAN



This plan lays out our Department's action plan through a series of goals, strategies, and actions. Taken together, these steps articulate the direction and priorities of our work for the next five years. They were developed through extensive engagement with staff at all levels, external stakeholder groups, and a robust community engagement process. This process is described in detail in Section III: Strategic Planning Process.

Our Strategic Plan consists of six goals. Each goal is a broad statement of what we want to accomplish to achieve our vision. Following each goal is a set of strategies, which describe how we plan to achieve our goals and impact the community. Each strategy has a list of actions that outline the specific activities we will undertake to achieve the strategies. The goals, strategies, and actions are not ranked and are only numbered for reference. However, actions are likely listed in chronological order.

Our Plan uses the SMARTIE strategic planning framework to develop its goals, strategies, actions, and key performance indicators (KPIs).¹⁷ SMARTIE stands for **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**mbitious, **R**ealistic, **T**imebound, **I**nclusive, and **E**quitable. Different tenets from this framework are used to develop different levels of the Plan. **S**pecific is utilized at the goal level to ensure clear connection between the Plan's goals and our organization's mission. Being simultaneously **A**mbitious and **R**ealistic is reflected in the careful selection of strategies and actions that reflect community needs, consider our staff's capacity, and push our organization to be leaders in the field. The Evaluation Tool features Timebound targets for the completion of each strategy and **M**easurable outcomes through KPIs evaluate the success of each strategy. Most importantly, the Plan uses an Inclusive and Equitable lens to assess every strategic decision, from the goals down to the KPIs, to ensure that our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is codified in actionable steps.

KEY TERMS

The following terms are used frequently throughout this document and are both foundational elements and key directives in our Department's workplan.

- **Equity:** Equity is an end state in which all groups have access to the resources and opportunities necessary to improve the quality of their lives.¹
- **Park equity:** A state in which all residents have access to our parks and green spaces – and the personal, social, economic, and environmental benefits these facilities provide – regardless of race, social class, gender, disability status, or other characteristics.²
- **Park need:** A unit of measurement, composed of quantitative and qualitative metrics, that indicates a community's requirement for investment in parklands, open spaces, and park facilities. DPR uses a proprietary metric and park need is determined differently for local parks and regional/rural facilities. For local parks, the 2016 **Parks Needs Assessment (PNA)** used measurements of available park acreage, walking distance, and population density, as well as qualitative analysis of park amenities and their condition.³ For regional parks and rural facilities, the 2022 **Parks Needs Assessment Plus (PNA+)** used metrics measuring social and transportation barriers, health and environmental vulnerability indicators, community proximity to regional/rural facilities, and rates of visitation to each facility.⁴ For detailed methodologies, please see the full reports.
- **Park access:** Describes how easily LA County residents can visit DPR-managed locations. Like park need, this metric is also measured differently for community parks and regional/rural facilities. For local parks, the 2016 PNA defines good park access as living within a half-mile walk of that facility.⁵ For regional and rural parks, the 2022 PNA+ recognizes that there are intersectional factors that complicate access to these facilities. The report uses a two-fold approach, analyzing indicators of barriers to transportation and measuring proximity by three different modes of travel – walking, bicycling, and driving.⁶ For detailed methodologies, please see the full reports.
- **High-Need & Very-High-Need park need communities:** Describes study areas designated by the 2016 **Parks Needs Assessment** with the two highest levels of park need.⁷ Also referred to as High-Need and Very-High-Need study areas.

WHO WE ARE

The Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR, Parks, the Department) administers a vast network of local and regional parks, natural areas, nature centers, wildlife sanctuaries, lakes, trails, arboreta, and botanic gardens. In addition to these open spaces, we also operate and maintain a significant number of recreation facilities, including 20 golf courses, which constitute the largest municipal golf system in the nation, thirty-six swimming pools, and two performance venues – the Hollywood Bowl and the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre. We oversee and activate 73,214 acres of parkland and recreation space through extensive programming serving youth, young adults, adults, seniors, and families.

These assets are central to life and culture in Los Angeles County and serve a vital role for millions of County residents by supporting healthy lifestyles, community connection, and access to resilient natural ecosystems. A robust public realm is the cornerstone of vibrant and inclusive communities. We are proud to steward parks, trails, and cultural centers where residents can enjoy nature and gather in community.



73,214
Acres of Parkland



182
DPR Parks



5
DPR HQ Offices

PARKS

-  **8** Regional Parks
-  **15** Wildlife Sanctuaries
-  **19** Community Regional Parks
-  **10** Nature Centers
-  **20** Community Parks
-  **20** Golf Courses
-  **38** Neighborhood Parks
-  **5** Senior Centers
-  **20** Pocket Parks/Park Nodes
-  **4** Gardens and Arboreta
-  **9** Natural Areas
-  **2** Performance Venues

TRAILS AND EQUESTRIAN PROGRAM

-  **235** Miles of Trails
-  **4** Equestrians Centers
-  **15** Staging Areas
-  **5** Equestrians Parks

PARK AMENITIES

-  **14** Lakes
(3 Boating And Recreation/Swimming Lakes)
-  **23** Splash Pads
-  **475** Sports Amenities
-  **13** Skate Parks
-  **30** Swimming Pools
-  **60** Community Centers
-  **1** Boxing Arena

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, DIVERSITY, COHESION, & INCLUSION

The Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation's Five-Year Strategic Plan 2023-2028 articulates DPR's role in fostering equity, diversity, cohesion, and inclusion through its stewardship of parks and healthy communities. Our commitment to an equitable and anti-racist framework served as the foundation for all decision-making during the development of the Plan's goals, strategies, and actions. The Plan codifies our long-term pledge to implement policies and programming that increase park access, improve public health, serve diverse and vulnerable populations, strengthen climate resiliency, and advance equitable workforce and economic development.

We are dedicated to improving park access countywide through an equitable allocation of resources. The 2016 Parks Needs Assessment (PNA) and 2022 Parks Needs Assessment+ (PNA+) created a needs-based framework for our future park investments and land conservation. The findings of the 2016 study showed that over half of the County's population lives in an area designated as "High Need" or Very High Need," determined by factors of available park acreage, walkable access, and park size relative to population density. 18 82% of the identified high-need areas are located in communities of color. 19 Whether funding a small maintenance project or building a brand-new park, the PNA's needs-based framework ensures that funding is prioritized for the communities most in need of the public health, community cohesion, and climate resiliency benefits parks offer.

We also develop and deliver culturally relevant programming for the most diverse County in the nation. 20 In 2020, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) made up 73% of the County's population. This population share is likely to increase in the coming years, as youth of color make up 83% of persons under eighteen. 21 We support these groups through recreation, cultural, and workforce programs that address racial, economic, gender, and sexual identity inequities across the County. Programs like "Our Spot" offers free after-school programming for teens and are rooted in restorative justice principles. Our Lifeguard Ready Training program is expanding our entry-level workforce's diversity by providing free training and a pathway to full-time employment for BIPOC youth and young adults. Our Healthy Parks Program addresses inequitable public health outcomes by developing Health and Wellness programs that serve unique community needs. These programs, and many others, are delivering much-needed services and connections in communities that have been subject to historic disinvestment.

For more on DPR's key programs and planning efforts, see Appendix A: Focus on Equity: Planning Efforts and Initiatives.

OUR MISSION, VISION & VALUES

Our mission, vision, and values guide the Department's day-to-day workings and our long-term strategic direction. These statements ground our work as LA County's premier recreation service provider and public lands steward. They act as our north star, guiding our organization towards the future all DPR employees want to see.

Mission

- Serve as stewards of parklands.
- Build healthy and resilient communities.
- Advance social equity and cohesion.

Vision

- To be a world-class parks and recreation organization.

Values

- **Compassion** – We cultivate emotional and cultural awareness that ensures empathy toward our diverse population.
- **Health and Wellness** – We are dedicated to enhancing the health and wellness of the communities and people we serve.
- **Inclusion** – We will intentionally seek diversity in the experience of our staff and ensure our offerings reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.
- **Innovation** – We dream big and combine creativity and productivity to design forward looking solutions.
- **Integrity and Dedication** – We exhibit loyalty, commitment, honor, and truthfulness in actions and deeds.
- **Stewardship and Sustainability** – We strive to balance social, economic, and environmental needs through proactive stewardship and conservation practices.

DPR Diversity Equity and Inclusion Statement



"At the Department of Parks and Recreation, diversity, equity, and inclusion drive our work to correct social, racial, gender-based, and environmental injustice. As a direct service provider to millions of people, including women and men, girls and boys, and non-binary persons of all backgrounds, our commitment to these values is unwavering. We are passionate about building and sustaining a workforce with lived experience that represents the diversity of the communities we serve. Our work is grounded in data and community engagement; fueled by urgent action and targeted investment; and evaluated by our results, impact, and the communities we serve. We work towards a future when every person in the County, especially communities most deprived of recreational opportunities, can enjoy the benefits of safe, clean, vibrant parks and trails."

POINT IN TIME: COVID-19 & OUR DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE

Los Angeles County experienced its first confirmed case of the novel coronavirus in January 2020 and soon implemented drastic measures to stop the spread of the virus.

Our parks served as critical social infrastructure through the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic. We offered facilities, social services, and workforce development initiatives that served the most vulnerable of LA County. Community and regional parks remained open and saw a record number of visitors. Regional parks averaged over 10,000 visitors per weekend, while botanic gardens and golf courses hosted a combined 2,000,000+ visitors between June 2020 and March 2021. These public facilities acted as forums for the larger movement for social and racial justice, hosting numerous protests with crowds numbering in the thousands.

Our parks programming changed in unique ways during the pandemic. Parks From Home was a virtual recreation center program that offered over 61 different free classes and 500+ hours of virtual programming on topics ranging from cooking to park tours to science projects. Our Department organized creative programming to bring people together safely. For example, it held a drive-thru quinceañera event for thirty-five girls in the foster system. Successful legacy programming continued as our annual Girls Empowerment Conference shifted to the virtual space, engaging seven hundred girls aged between 11 and 18, to amplify their voices, and explore college pathways and career goals.

Our Department played a key role in providing social services for the County's disadvantaged residents affected by the economic pressures of the pandemic and stay-at-home orders. Acting quickly to bring new services online, we provided COVID testing and vaccination at 44 different community and regional parks. DPR staff also supported the County's Disaster Service Worker Program by redeploying 620 staff members to aid the County's larger pandemic response efforts. We also responded to growing food insecurity during this time, with drive-thru Food Distribution events and the Summer Lunch and Snack program. Food Distribution events were executed in partnership with the Board of Supervisors, Chief Executive Office, LA Regional Food Bank, and County departments. Over 100 events were held at 14 different parks and 10,000,000+ pounds of food were distributed to over half a million County residents. The Summer Lunch and Snack programs were equally successful, distributing 52,000 lunches and 32,000 snacks across 49 different park locations.

Finally, we developed new programs that supported an equitable economic recovery and provided workforce development opportunities for youth and adults.

The Contract Class Program launched in September 2020 offers the opportunity for local artists and community members to propose and lead classes at our park facilities. This program helps to build strong and resilient communities by providing high-quality culturally relevant recreation offerings while supporting local individuals and businesses. This program grew to feature over 250 classes and supports 120+ instructors. We also launched the Youth@Work initiative during Winter 2021. Working in partnership with Workforce Development Aging and Community Services (WDACS) and several other organizations, this program employed 340 youth at 55 parks. Recruited from vulnerable communities across the County, these youth workers helped deliver spring programming and provide services at local neighborhood parks.

Whether providing a space for relaxation and recreation, to overseeing social services and employment opportunities, DPR has led the way in supporting County residents through the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. This challenging time demonstrated our ability to rapidly respond to community needs and develop programs and initiatives that ensure a safety net for County residents. Many of these programs will continue into the foreseeable future, further establishing the role of parks as essential public infrastructure enhancing the quality of life across the region.





III. STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

We engaged Estolano Advisors and Studio-MLA (the consultant team) to lead the development of the Strategic Plan. The consultant team used a collaborative approach to drafting and outreach that involved a broad range of DPR staff at all levels, local stakeholders, advocates, community-based organizations, and peer agencies. This process used extensive internal engagement within the Department to develop the Plan’s goals, strategies, and actions and external engagement with stakeholders and community members to help prioritize the strategies. We engaged our staff internally through interviews, virtual roundtables, an all-day in-person retreat, and extended working groups. External stakeholder engagement included interviews with key stakeholders and thematic roundtables with advocates and community-based organizations. Community engagement, led by Katherine Padilla & Associates with support from Studio-MLA, included virtual open houses and pop-up events at community and regional parks. The following sections detail high-level takeaways. More information is available in the Appendix B: Engagement Summaries.

Internal Engagement 1st Phase

INTERVIEWS & FOCUS GROUPS

Process and Objectives

Between February and June 2021, the consultant team worked with our staff to develop the Strategic Plan Goals, gauge internal alignment with the existing mission, vision, and value statements, construct a snapshot of the current state of the Department, and identify opportunities and challenges for the Department. The consultant team conducted five interviews and six focus groups with over 50 Department staff at all levels to provide input. The input received informed the first draft of the Strategic Plan Goals. Following these engagements, we held an all-day in-person staff retreat with forty members of Department leadership to review the findings and provide further input to finalize the Plan’s Goals.

Key Takeaways

- **Existing mission, vision, and values:** Participants felt that the Department's current work was strongly aligned with DPR's guiding purpose statements.
- **Equity and inclusion:** Participants expressed that equity and inclusion undergird all of DPR's work and that staff members reflect those values personally.
- **Internal reorganization:** Interviewees expressed that the internal reorganization has been successful but not without challenges.
- **Facilities and land assets:** High-quality facilities and land assets are DPR's key differentiation from other County agencies and the Department should leverage these in new, innovative ways.
- **Leveraging human resources:** DPR staff are the heart and soul of the Department. Top priorities for staff included improving existing staff capacity, investing in training and succession planning, and building a jobs pipeline for the next generation of DPR employees.
- **Technology and data:** We need to continue to invest in technology and

Internal Engagement 2nd Phase

WORKING GROUP SESSIONS

Process and Objectives

Between November 2021 and March 2022, the consultant team led a working group process with DPR staff to identify and draft the Plan's strategies and actions. Six working groups, one for each goal, were comprised of staff members from all departments and at varying levels of leadership. With guidance from the consultant team, fifty-four staff members in thirteen meetings developed the core elements of the plan. Following this extended engagement, the Department's executive leadership and section heads held a working meeting to revise and prioritize the strategies and actions. This process produced the actions and strategies detailed in Section III "Our Strategic Plan."

External Engagement

INTERVIEWS & ROUNDTABLES

Process and Objectives

Between January 2022 and April 2022, the consultant team conducted eight interviews and four topical roundtables with a cross-section of stakeholders and partners. This included public agency representatives, community-based organizations, advocates, philanthropy, programming partners, and community leaders. Roundtable topics included Juvenile Justice Prevention, Park Equity, Workforce Development, and Core and Community Partners. This engagement gauged external alignment with the Department's mission, vision, and values, identified future opportunities and challenges in relevant work areas, provided feedback on programming and partnerships, and ultimately helped to prioritize the draft strategies of the Plan.

Key Takeaways

- **Importance of strategic planning:** Strategic planning is vital for our continued success. It is important to create a mechanism that ties new initiatives back to the Plan and tracks progress on the goals.
- **Department's role in the pandemic:** We should capture the momentum generated by the role of parks as critical social infrastructure during the pandemic.
- **Climate resilience:** We should play a key role in the County's future climate resilience efforts.
- **Safety at parks:** Creating safe park spaces and pathways to parks is a key priority.
- **Partnerships:** Improving existing partnership structures and creating new collaborations with community-based organizations can cultivate long-term relationships in vulnerable communities.
- **Communication strategies:** We should develop new communication strategies with and for community-based organizations.
- **Staffing and job opportunities:** Following the height of the pandemic, investing in the capacity of DPR staff and creating new job pathways into the Department are top priorities.



Community Engagement

TALKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Process and Objectives

The Plan's community engagement outreach centered residents' voices in identifying the priorities of the plan. Between March and April 2022, the consultant team used a variety of engagement methods such as virtual open houses, pop-up events at parks, and an online survey to solicit community input. This input helped inform which strategies were included in the final draft of the Plan.

Key Takeaways

Through the community engagement process, the community identified the following top priorities for members of the public:

- **Safety at parks and safe park access:** Improvements in and around parks are essential to a positive park going experience including cleanliness, lighting, infrastructure maintenance, and bicycle and pedestrian connections.
- **More adult programming:** The Department should provide more opportunities for active and passive recreation programs for adults.
- **Stewardship and preservation of natural spaces:** Protection of the natural environment and enhancing opportunities to connect with nature and natural spaces.
- **Improved ADA access at parks:** Improving ADA accessibility for people with limited mobility at existing parks is a key priority.
- **Partnerships:** DPR should establish more partnerships with local community-based organizations and engage youth about job opportunities within the Department.
- **Climate resiliency:** Working with local community-based organizations on climate resiliency initiatives is important.

IV. OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

GOALS

Goal #1:

Promote play and well-being of youth, families, and seniors

Strategies ensure the delivery of high-quality recreation opportunities for communities most in need. These strategies support equitable public health outcomes, offer programming that closes access gaps based on race, gender, sexuality, age, or economic situation, and are hosted at safe and welcoming park facilities.

Goal #2:

Strengthen programs, experiences, and engagement in community

Strategies ensure deeply collaborative engagement with community-based organizations and community members in the development processes of park facilities, programming, and creative partnerships.

Goal #3:

Increase park equity and access to innovative park space

Strategies detail the methods and funding opportunities that will increase park access in high-need communities and promote creative uses of existing park facilities.

Goal #4:

Invest in staff and volunteers

Strategies describe how our Department will be a leader in local employment, invest in staff skills and well-being, and develop a strong volunteer program.

Goal #5:

Provide stewardship of public lands, natural resources, and urban forestry

Strategies show how our Department will manage natural resources on a regional scale, invest in tree canopy, trails, and historic resources, and maintain high-quality, climate resilient parks.

Goal #6:

Advance organizational excellence

Strategies lay out our Department's internal actions to advance excellence in operations, communications, budgeting, technology, and data integration to better serve LA County residents.



Goal #1:

PROMOTE PLAY AND WELL-BEING OF YOUTH, FAMILIES, AND SENIORS

Context

Expanding recreation access and creating programming for diverse populations are core to DPR's mission and rectify public health inequities across LA County. We are dedicated to building healthy and safe communities through programming for women and men, girls and boys, and non-binary persons of all backgrounds and abilities.

Parks and recreation programs promote physical activity for all ages. Research shows that community members who live within walking access of park facilities have lower rates of obesity and engage in more physical activity than residents who do not have the same level of park access. Parks encourage regular physical exercise, and this can help lower the incidence of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and certain types of cancer.²⁴ Recreation and access to green spaces can also provide mental health benefits.²⁵

Quality programming that serves seniors, individuals with disabilities, women, and girls, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and systems-involved youth can drastically improve health and life outcomes for members of these populations.

For instance, research has shown that a lack of physical or social activity opportunities contributes to higher rates of poor mental health and substance abuse amongst LGBTQIA+ individuals.²⁶ According to a 2018 National Recreation and Park Association survey on inclusion in parks and recreation, parks systems nationwide lacked programming for LGBTQIA+ individuals. At the time of the survey, only 30% of surveyed agencies were providing tailored programming to this vulnerable population.²⁷ We are responding to a clear need in the region through efforts like a gender-inclusive sports league for girls, referee and coaching employment opportunities for LGBTQIA+ individuals, and the drafting of a transgender sports policy. Through a commitment to ensuring programmatic coverage for diverse and high-need groups, DPR can improve physical and mental health outcomes

for LA County residents.

Parks also foster community well-being by deploying violence prevention efforts through programming and events. The Parks After Dark program provides free activities and resources for children, teens, and families at up to thirty parks during the summer months. This effort has improved community perceptions of safety, bolstered community relationships with law enforcement, improved community cohesion, and reduced serious and violent crime in the surrounding communities.²⁸ Programs like this one and other efforts in programming, infrastructure, and staffing will continue to enhance park safety and improve quality of life outcomes for LA County residents.

Impact

We have had a substantial positive impact on the County's population through recreation programs, events, and violence prevention programs. In FY2021-22 alone, health outcomes were improved for the 683,000 participants in DPR's Core Programs.²⁹ Core Program Areas include youth programs and sports, senior programs, adult programs, aquatics, arts and culture, community events, fitness and wellness, and rentals. Health outcomes are further increased by free access to fitness facilities, including sixty fitness and exercising parks, thirty fitness courses, and thirty fitness zones.

DPR's violence prevention and early intervention programs have also reached thousands of youths and families in LA County. Previously, Parks After Dark served 386,000 people in a single year and is planned to return to that capacity following temporary pandemic-era budget reallocations.³⁰ Similarly, we offer recreation programs that serve as prevention and early intervention tools. These programs provide youth access to caring and trained staff who foster positive youth development, encourage social-emotional learning, explore career choices, and build safety and trust. About 404,000 youth residents are projected to participate in these programs in FY2021-22.³¹

Equity, Diversity, Cohesion, & Inclusion Commitment

We are committed to ensuring safe park spaces by promoting violence prevention and targeted infrastructure investment in neighborhoods with high incidences of serious or violent crime. Strategy 1.3.1 "Expand our violence prevention programs and partnerships...to promote Safe Passages, parks as Safe Zones, and better define program structures and outcomes" will see us work collaboratively with the Office of Violence Prevention, gang interventionists, and the Sheriffs Parks Bureau to ensure park sites are safe for all community residents.



STRATEGIES

1.1 Expand affordable play and recreation programs in high and very high-park need communities

ACTIONS

- 1.1.1 Establish a sports division to increase youth participation and address equity and access to youth sports and aquatics programs.
- 1.1.2 Establish an LA County intramural competitive sports league program offering a variety of sports for youth and adults.
- 1.1.3 Expand pilot mobile recreation unit to support play, ESTEAM, sports and/or arts.
- 1.1.4 Close the out-of-school care infrastructure gap by expanding afterschool and summer camp opportunities through Every Body Plays, Every Body Explores, ESTEAM, and Summer Adventure Camps.
- 1.1.5 Use the program review committee and the countywide sports committee to adopt new, innovative practices, and programs and regularly reevaluate existing policies and procedures to address systemic racism, diversity, equity, and access.
- 1.1.6 Secure permanent funding for the Parks After Dark program for spring, summer, and winter.
- 1.1.7 Expand "Our Spot" afterschool program and develop programming to include restorative justice practices, focused on deterring juvenile crime during out of school hours and supporting pathways to youth employment and STEM education opportunities.

1.2 Develop programming for seniors, persons with disabilities, women and girls, LGBTQIA+, and systems-involved youth

ACTIONS

- 1.2.1 Develop a transgender sports participation policy.
- 1.2.2 Develop a gender inclusive girl sports league program.
- 1.2.3 Develop an adaptive sports program and increase offerings and

participation in adaptive sports programs.

- 1.2.4 Increase recreation scholarship opportunities through the Los Angeles County Parks Foundation by expanding relationships with philanthropic partners.
- 1.2.5 Establish a senior division and conduct a senior needs assessment to expand senior programs and services.
- 1.2.6 Develop a coach and officials recruitment and training program for women and LGBTQIA+ persons.

1.3 Increase park safety through safe passages, infrastructure investments, programming, and other interventions

ACTIONS

- 1.3.1 Expand our violence prevention programs and partnerships, including programs with the Office of Violence Prevention, gang interventionists, and the Sheriffs Parks Bureau, to promote Safe Passages, parks as Safe Zones and better define program structures and outcomes.
- 1.3.2 Develop a Community Partnerships for Public Safety program, in collaboration with community-based organizations, ARDI, and the Office of Violence prevention to guide the practices and operation of the Sheriffs Parks Bureau.
- 1.3.3 Develop and seek funding for a Park Safety Ambassador Program.
- 1.3.4 Develop a lighting assessment study prioritizing parks with higher incidences of crime and seek funding from Infrastructure LA to increase safety through lighting projects.
- 1.3.5 Continue installation of security cameras in parks with higher incidences of crime.
- 1.3.6 Conduct an annual evaluation of Parks After Park (PAD) to guide the program and document its benefits, especially the impact on crime prevention and community safety.
- 1.3.7 Update policies and procedures that provide guidance for parks staff when responding to disruptive or violent incidents at park facilities.



Goal #2:

STRENGTHEN PROGRAMS, EXPERIENCES, AND ENGAGEMENT IN COMMUNITY

Context

Every DPR park is unique because it reflects the community around it and the people who activate it daily. A strong two-way connection between our staff and park goers is necessary for our parks to evolve alongside each community's needs and ensure that we are maximizing the impact of our green spaces, programming, and services. Goal 2's strategies actuate this vision through investments in community engagement, data collection, and expanded partnerships with local community partners.

Our Department works to center community voices to address long-term procedural inequities in municipal government. Improving procedural equity means implementing "decision-making processes that are transparent, equitable, and inclusive about who participates, how they are engaged, and how their input is valued and applied." ³² In-depth and frequent community engagement can help ensure stakeholder input drives our program and infrastructure development while improving project outcomes and building trust with local communities. Successful community engagement processes also build a sense of connection and stewardship between a community and its parks. ³³

Frequent data collection and well-articulated analyses can help us impact park users' experience at macro and micro levels. Parks agencies across the country are using data to inform and evaluate planning initiatives, investment decisions, and program participation, and increase understanding of their constituents. Data efforts like DPR's Parks Needs Assessment and the Regional Park and Open Space District's Park Investment Map Viewer are helping our staff and County partners make informed, data-driven decisions at the regional level about resource allocation to high park need communities.

At the park site level, program surveys and registration data are helping us to enhance amenities and ensure that program deployment is aligning with community needs.

External partnerships help us bring unique programming and expand the range of community experiences offered. Working with community groups, County partners, and philanthropic and cultural institutions increases and strengthens our roster of recreation and cultural programs. Partnerships with community-based organizations are essential to identifying the uses residents want to see in their parks. Finally, we work closely with County and school district partners who share a similar mission, such as the Department of Public Health, Office of Violence Prevention, and others.

Impact

We have overhauled our data collection methodology and analysis. In 2021, we revised our Performance Measures Report to better align the report’s inputs with the organization’s mission to ensure equitable impact in the County’s unincorporated areas. The revision included improved tracking of racial, ethnic, gender, and income demographics, work order tracking to prioritize deferred maintenance at high-need parks, improved communications tracking metrics to engage hard- to- reach communities, and others. As this database grows in the coming years, we will be able to serve communities more efficiently and effectively.

Partnerships are critical to our work. In FY2020-21, we engaged in over 1,200 different partnerships with community-based organizations and foundations to support programming on violence prevention and early intervention. Similarly, DPR holds sixteen different partnerships with organizations that provide programming to connect community members to nature. These partnerships provide a foundation on which we can expand our offerings and increase participants.

Equity, Diversity, Cohesion, & Inclusion Commitment

Having consistent touch points with community members and local organizations will ensure park experiences better reflect and serve local communities. Strategies 2.1.1 “Develop an information and outreach plan for each park” and 2.1.4 “Hold an annual community meeting at each neighborhood and community park” will ensure that local stakeholders like community members, schools, churches, community-based organizations, and local businesses play an integral role in developing programs, amenities, and infrastructure projects.



STRATEGIES

2.1 Prioritize community engagement for programs, services, and park development

ACTIONS

- 2.1.1 Develop an information and outreach plan for each park identifying key stakeholders like schools, churches, community-based organizations, and local businesses.
- 2.1.2 Develop outreach protocols to ensure community partners are engaged at the earliest stage of new infrastructure planning.
- 2.1.3 Build the capacity for recreation staff to continuously engage with community stakeholders.
- 2.1.4 Hold an annual community meeting at each neighborhood and community park in September to provide and solicit feedback for the yearly program schedule and park planning projects.

2.2 Enhance data collection to inform park experience and program evaluation

ACTIONS

- 2.2.1 Establish metrics and an evaluation process for core recreation program areas.
- 2.2.2 Develop and deploy an annual recreation market needs survey, with a special focus on diverse populations, to understand recreational program interests and preferences throughout Los Angeles County.
- 2.2.3 Convene on a quarterly basis the Recreation Program Review Committee to review and evaluate programs, registrations, reservations data and market surveys to inform program development and enhancement.
- 2.2.4 Using Qualtrics, develop participant program surveys and evaluation program.
- 2.2.5 Convene an internal working group to review registration and reservation data, recreation market survey data, and to make recommendations for enhanced amenities and recreational offerings.

2.3 Expand Partnerships for programming, community, and park going experiences

ACTIONS

- 2.3.1 Conduct a gap analysis of our core and community partnerships to expand partnership opportunities.
- 2.3.2 Establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) template to centralize and expand coordination between DPR and County departments to strengthen program delivery.
- 2.3.3 Implement the school-use Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to further expand partnerships with schools and parks.
- 2.3.4 Partner with the Natural History Museum, LACMA, the Department of Arts and Culture, the LA Philharmonic Association, community-based organizations, the Music Center, DPR's Gardens and Arboreta and Contract Class community providers to enhance arts and culture programming at parks and bridge the access to arts and culture.
- 2.3.5 Partner with community-based organizations to enhance programming, interpretative education, and community safety.
- 2.3.6 Expand partnerships with Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) and other County and external partners to connect unhoused individuals in parks to wraparound services.



Goal #3:

INCREASE PARK EQUITY AND ACCESS TO INNOVATIVE PARK SPACE

Context

Parks, green spaces, and trails are fundamental to creating healthy, thriving, and inclusive communities. Having walkable access to a park has shown positive demonstrable effects for communities like improvements to social cohesion, physical and mental health, childhood development, youth involvement with the justice system, workforce opportunities, and environmental benefits.³⁵

However, decades of racist land use policies and inequitable allocation of resources have resulted in a lopsided distribution of parks throughout LA County.³⁶ DPR's 2016 Parks Needs Assessment (PNA) analyzed the existing state of park access in the County. 51% of the County's population lives beyond a ½ mile walk to a park facility.³⁷ Additionally, most parks in the County are undersized relative to population density. With the County average at 3.3 park acres per 1,000 residents, this "park pressure" metric indicates that a sizeable 80% of County parks have less than 3.3 acres available to their surrounding communities. This means most parks are likely to experience heavy usage due to their population burden.³⁸

Over half of the County needs more parkland with better access. The PNA identified that 32% of the County lived in an area designated as "Very High Park Need" and 20% lived in "High Park Need" areas.³⁹ 82% of the identified high-need areas are also located in a community of color, which are more likely to also be disadvantaged by inequities in the transportation system, environmental pollution caused by toxic land uses, decreased access to economic opportunity, and involvement with the justice system.⁴⁰ These conditions make targeted investment into new and improved parks in these communities more urgent than ever.

Impact

Our Department is committed to making equitably targeted investments in the County's highest-need communities. Over the past two years, we have improved 56 different parks, a total of 120 acres of improved parklands, and nearly 170 miles of new or improved trails. These investments improved the lives of over 300,000 residents, with two-thirds of those affected living in high or very-high park needs areas.

DPR is creating new park spaces in creative ways through partnerships and imaginative spatial uses. By developing underutilized areas, like utility corridors, flood control channels, railroads, publicly owned land, and joint use agreements with local schools, we are acting resourcefully to positively impact communities. The 92nd Street Linear Park Development Project is an example of creative thinking and partnership having a positive impact. Located in the unincorporated community of Florence-Firestone, this project will redevelop a utility corridor into a transformational project that supports community open space and recreation needs. It will include new jogging/walking paths, three half basketball courts, a multi-purpose sports field, four playground areas, shade structures, exercise equipment, an outdoor performance stage, public art, a community garden, fencing/gates, and landscaping and lighting throughout the park.

Additionally, we are leveraging partnerships with transit agencies and agencies responsible for active transportation infrastructure to support mode shift from single-occupancy vehicle travel and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Parks will be used as mobility hubs to support multi-use trails along the Emerald Necklace greenway loop in the San Gabriel Valley. Partnerships with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Agency (Metro) and other local transit agencies will help ensure easy community access to local and regional parks. Coordination efforts with LA County Public Works and the Department of Public Health PLACE program will target investment for safe street improvements along the County's Vision Zero Collision Concentration Corridors – where most traffic-related injuries and fatalities occur – and improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety around in and around park sites.

Equity, Diversity, Cohesion, & Inclusion Commitment

Park access is critical for health communities. Strategy 3.1.1 "Prioritize land acquisitions and park amenities to ensure that unincorporated residents live within a 10-minute walk and/or a ½-mile radius from parkland" codifies our commitment to equitable park access countywide. Additionally, we are implementing strategies that address other systemic inequities in resource distribution. Strategy 3.1.5 "Develop and implement an equity analysis process for decision-making to prioritize investments and services in historically underserved communities" addresses a legacy of inequitable and racist resource distribution in the County. Strategy 3.2.5 "Coordinate with LA County Public Works and other County agencies to implement the Vision Zero Action Plan" works to rectify inequities in the transportation system and the built environment.



STRATEGIES

3.1 Increase parkland and access prioritizing high park-need communities

ACTIONS

- 3.1.1 Prioritize land acquisitions and park amenities to ensure that unincorporated residents live within a 10-minute walk and/or a ½-mile radius from parkland.
- 3.1.2 Update the Department's parkland acquisition strategy guided by the Parks Needs Assessment and PNA+.
- 3.1.3 Expand school joint-use opportunities to increase parkland in high park need areas as identified in the Park Needs Assessment and PNA+.
- 3.1.4 Explore partnerships to provide parkland in underutilized areas, like utility corridors, flood control channels, railroads, and publicly owned land.
- 3.1.5 Develop and implement an equity analysis process for decision-making to prioritize investments and services in historically underserved communities and help ensure our programs and services are eliminating racial disparities.

3.2 Develop opportunities for parks to serve as mobility hubs

ACTIONS

- 3.2.1 Pilot mobility multi-use trail hubs along the Emerald Necklace (Whittier Narrows, Santa Fe Dam, and Peck Park Park) to support pedestrian, bicycle, and new mobility uses.
- 3.2.2 Establish regional parks as staging areas for our multi-use trails system.
- 3.2.3 Develop a trail program that highlights regional active transportation corridors through signage, maps, wayfinding, and connections to the multi-use trail and bicycle system at regional parks.
- 3.2.4 Work with Metro and other transit agencies to create public transportation connections to regional parks.
- 3.2.5 Coordinate with LA County Public Works and other County agencies to implement the Vision Zero Action Plan and eliminate pedestrian and traffic injuries near park sites through safe street design.

3.3 Enhance opportunities for creative park use and revenue generation

ACTIONS

- 3.3.1 Develop policies and procedures that will allow the Department to use parks as special event venues, with guidance from the DPR Special Events Strategic Plan.
- 3.3.2 Establish a business development unit that will serve to promote, market, and facilitate agreements for special events.
- 3.3.3 Identify and engage special event partners to expand opportunities for revenue generation.
- 3.3.4 Increase revenue generation opportunities at parks through business planning, advertising, and sponsorship.
- 3.3.5 Build DPR staff capacity & negotiation practices for revenue generating contracts with outside parties to maximize returns.
- 3.3.6 Increase philanthropic opportunities through partnerships with organizations, including the Los Angeles County Parks Foundation, to support departmentwide initiatives.
- 3.3.7 Develop a revenue-share strategy for naming rights to be incorporated into future lease agreements.
- 3.3.8 Develop a facility catalog for revenue generating opportunities.
- 3.3.9 Conduct a market analysis and benchmark study to determine fair-market value of department facilities and concessions.
- 3.3.10 Create a community-benefit standard for leases and concessions.
- 3.3.11 Develop a menu of sponsorship opportunities, including memorials, naming rights, and special events.



Goal #4:

INVEST IN STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Context

We are a major governmental employer in the Los Angeles County area. We employ 2,500 full and part-time employees in more than 150 job classifications including recreation, grounds maintenance, crafts, landscape architecture, planning and development, golf, contracts, special districts, and administration.⁴² Our Department is also supported by a robust volunteer corps. In FY2020-21, 272 volunteers spent 13,724 hours helping to support our work.⁴³

We have an established “can-do” culture and workplace unity underpinned by a high number of long-tenured staff, many of whom have worked their way up through the recreation pathway. Internal engagement revealed our employees highly value each other’s individual qualities, our diverse backgrounds, and how these values influence our workplace culture.⁴⁴ To continue the tradition of a high-quality and cohesive workforce, we are committed to consistently improving the well-being of existing employees and investing in new hires who reflect the diversity of communities served by parks across the County.

Our Plan looks to a future where our workforce is built back better and stronger following the staffing challenges of COVID-19 pandemic. Enforced budget cuts, shifted responsibilities, and increased workload challenged staff capacity across all areas of the Department. Even so, our staff worked harder than ever to continue our mission of helping vulnerable County residents in a time of crisis. In the face of these difficulties, we persevered and accomplished ambitious targets – more detail on these accomplishments can be found in the “Point in time: COVID-19 & our Department’s response” section. To ensure sustainable staffing in the future and the long-term health of our workforce, Goal 4’s strategies address these challenges by succession planning for internal promotion pathways and near-term retirement vacancies, developing improved training and mentorship programs, expanding pilot workforce development programs, and engaging CBO programming partners and our volunteer corps to support staff.

Impact

Our workforce development initiatives are having positive effects on vulnerable populations throughout the region. The Youth@Work program employed 391 youth employees during FY2020-21; it is projected to increase over two-fold in FY2021-2022 to 891 employees. These youth hires will learn new skills, support the implementation of valuable social services programming, and often gain first-time work experience that can help launch their careers. ⁴⁵The Lifeguard Ready Training program is projected to provide free skills training to almost 1000 youth trainees in FY2021-2022. ⁴⁶This program intentionally recruits in diverse communities and with systems-involved youth to expand the diversity of our entry-level workforce and create a pathway to higher levels of employment through valuable skills training. Equally important, we have been training current recreation staff to integrate Trauma-Informed Care principles. With a projected 1,600 recreation staff members developing this new skill set, we anticipate engaging over 26,000 teen participants with trauma-informed principles in staff-provided safe and empowered spaces. ⁴⁷

Equity, Diversity, Cohesion, & Inclusion Commitment

An equitable workforce means increasing the diversity of hires, acknowledging systemic disadvantages like involvement with the justice system, and increasing access to economic opportunity through targeted recruitment and the reduction of barriers to career advancement. Action 4.1.1, “Develop a Recreation Recruitment Plan” codifies our equity commitment by intentionally recruiting BIPOC, systems-involved and foster-youth, and community college students into recreation and aquatic employment pathways. This action enables greater economic equity for marginalized County residents, bringing job opportunities to them through targeted outreach, and simultaneously building a stronger and more culturally competent workforce.



STRATEGIES

4.1 Invest in employee well-being and mental health

ACTIONS

- 4.1.1 Develop a staff recognition program that includes retirement scrolls, celebration of life events, and service awards
- 4.1.2 Support department programs, like the Employee Awards Committee and Grounds Maintenance Symposium.
- 4.1.3 Establish protocols for partnerships with mental health providers to respond to park crisis incidents and traumatic events.
- 4.1.4 Convene a working group to explore employee feedback tools and management report back methods to improve staff satisfaction and retention, including staff surveys, targeted focus groups, and exit and “stay” interviews.
- 4.1.5 Conduct workforce analysis to right-size classifications and staffing levels across recreation, grounds maintenance, and aquatics.

4.2 Develop a training academy for department core areas

ACTIONS

- 4.2.1 Develop a library of training topics for recreation, grounds maintenance, trades, aquatics, and administrative positions, including County-mandatory, job-specific and those from corrective action plans.
- 4.2.2 Develop a training schedule for recreation, grounds maintenance, trades, aquatics, and administrative positions.
- 4.2.3 Develop curriculum for in-house training topics.
- 4.2.4 Develop the Departmental Training Academy framework aimed at identifying training topics that include Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), Trauma-Informed Care, positive human development, and restorative justice training schedules and curricula.
- 4.2.5 Develop training and guides to support internal promotions on the following topics:
 - Promotional pathways and career ladders
 - Internal and external training opportunities
- 4.2.6 Develop and deploy an engagement training program for recreational leaders to build connections with principals, parents, and students at nearby community schools.
- 4.2.7 Develop a training module to support women in supervisory grounds maintenance roles.
- 4.2.8 Develop a supervisor training program for women and LBGTQIA+ individuals for the lake lifeguard series, including the pool/aquatic program, and review all policies to ensure inclusivity.

4.3 Develop a Departmentwide succession plan

ACTIONS

- 4.3.1 Perform a landscape analysis of positions within the Department that articulates near-term vacancies, potential promotion pathways for existing employees, training needs, and retention strategies.
- 4.3.2 Build, retain, and develop staff and leadership that represent the communities we serve, transfers institutional knowledge, and proactively plan for retirements.

4.4 Serve as a leader for community level employment and job pathways

ACTIONS

- 4.4.1 Develop a Recreation Recruitment Plan to target BIPOC, systems-involved and foster youth, and community college students for recreation and aquatic employment.
- 4.4.2 Expand the successful pilot partnership between DPR, Conservation Corps, and Preparing Los Angeles Residents for County Employment (PLACE) to employ systems-involved young adults in our grounds maintenance positions.
- 4.4.3 Partner with the Economic and Workforce Development branch of WDACS to serve as the County’s largest youth employer.
- 4.4.4 Partner with the Probation Department and Department of Children and Family Services to expand the Lifeguard Ready Training program to provide opportunities for systems-involved youth, probation camps, and foster youth.
- 4.4.5 Seek funding to establish an apprenticeship program for women in trades.
- 4.4.6 Serve as largest employer for youth, seniors, and part-time employment by partnering with the Economic and Workforce Development branch of WDACS to provide job placement sites.
- 4.4.7 Establish partnerships with the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) to develop internship and/or apprenticeship programs for park special events and production (e.g., lighting, sound, stage-hand, etc.).
- 4.4.8 Partner with Aging & Disabilities Department to serve as an employment partner.

4.5 Establish and centralize a departmental volunteer corps

ACTIONS

- 4.5.1 Prioritize recruiting volunteers for core programming, such as out-of-school and sports programming in our high-need/vulnerable parks.
- 4.5.2 Research, and work toward releasing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the new online Volunteer Management System.
- 4.5.3 Standardize the recruitment and onboarding of volunteer workers to strengthen the employment pipeline for former volunteers.
- 4.5.4 Implement a centralized online Volunteer Management System with a self-service portal, attendance tracking, calendar management, event management, member directory, registration management, scheduling, and report running.
- 4.5.5 Update existing Volunteer Handbooks and make them available on the online Volunteer Management System.



Goal #5:

PROVIDE STEWARDSHIP OF PUBLIC LANDS, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND URBAN FORESTRY

Context

DPR's Natural Areas Division manages a total of 6,068 acres, making us one of the largest landowners in Los Angeles County, one of the most biodiverse regions in the world.⁴⁸ However, climate change poses a risk to the biodiversity and habitability of these lands and the region's ecosystem. Per the **LA County Climate Vulnerability Assessment**, LA County can expect to experience increased frequency, severity, and duration of extreme heat, larger, more frequent, and more destructive wildfires, drier springs and summers, and increased risk of inland flooding during winters, sea-level rise of 2.5 feet by mid-century, and more droughts and mega droughts as climate change effects worsen.⁴⁹ As the County's steward of natural resources, DPR can lead the way to equitably leverage its assets and knowledge to enhance natural spaces and play a key role in the County's climate resiliency.

Intelligent land stewardship has the potential to address existing inequities in climate change impacts for LA County residents. Frequently, LA County residents who live in high park need areas are also disproportionately vulnerable to the risks of climate change.⁵⁰ Extreme heat is likely to be the most severe effect in the County. Unincorporated communities in East LA and South LA are particularly vulnerable to the effects of extreme heat due to a lack of tree canopy, an excess of impermeable pavement, and residents with low adaptive capacity due to economic and public health factors.⁵¹ Our holistic approach to addressing extreme heat effects encompasses tree and shade equity initiatives including improving urban tree canopy in and around park spaces, increasing the amount of permeable surface on

DPR-owned land, and prioritizing the development of cooling centers for community members.

With climate change expected to exacerbate heat and health threats, DPR has also teamed up with community groups and educators to address equitable urban tree cover with a sense of urgency. In 2021, DPR partnered with Tree Pledge and Radical Resilience Lab to strategically plant trees where they are most needed through a new urban reforestation program called Good Shade. Good Shade was designed to address shade equity disparities in underserved areas of Los Angeles County by planting trees throughout the region in communities designated very high-need per the PNA.⁵² DPR and partners seek to plant hundreds of trees across the county park system, offer a multidisciplinary range of education opportunities, and engage residents in supporting the new trees.

Impact

Our parks host events and programs for community members to develop into the next generation of land stewards and environmental champions. We promote land stewardship at park spaces, through access to natural lands, and via programming and partnerships. In FY2020-21, over 860,600 people visited a natural area, and over 13,000 people attended a natural area program.⁵³ These natural areas provide habitat for native wildlife and foster LA County residents' connection to nature. In FY2020-21, over 7,700 people attended an Every Body Explores event, a new program that provides youth with free activities and workshops to discover, explore, and create while learning about the natural world around them.⁵⁴ The Every Body Explores program was the most well-attended event last year among nature centers and education core programs. We also collaborate with local organizations to deepen residents' connection to nature. Currently, sixteen organizational partnerships increase community access to nature and improve community wellness.⁵⁵ These organizational partnerships are a crucial component of our efforts to develop the next generation of environmental champions.

Equity, Diversity, Cohesion, & Inclusion Commitment

Parks provide communities with urban tree canopy, a vital amenity that reduces the heat island effect, improves respiratory health outcomes by capturing particulate matter, and provides cool shared spaces for community members to enjoy.⁵⁸ Action 5.3.2, "Develop a tree reforestation initiative prioritizing low canopy in high and very high need park communities" is an equitable reforestation strategy focused on communities in need. By prioritizing high- and very high-need communities in this initiative, we will reduce current inequities in tree canopies that have resulted from historic disinvestment.



STRATEGIES

5.1 Provide stewardship and leadership in regional land conservation

ACTIONS

- 5.1.1 Prioritize and implement the 2022 Parks Needs Assessment+ as the County's 30x30 initiative, which identifies opportunities and priorities for acquisitions and funding for conservation, restoration, and operations in alignment with state and federal 30x30 initiatives.
- 5.1.2 Prioritize land conservation, environmental restoration, and expansion of existing natural areas for the protection of endangered species, habitat, wildlife corridors and sanctuaries.
- 5.1.3 Expand trail agency partners, and strengthen the countywide trails website and app to serve as the go-to public resource to increase trail access.
- 5.1.4 Establish a quarterly meeting with national, state, and local, public parkland agencies and conservancies to coordinate regional parkland initiatives and implementation of the Parks Needs Assessment and PNA+.

5.2 Serve as the County's multi-use trail coordinator

ACTIONS

- 5.2.1 Expand the quarterly countywide trail managers taskforce to coordinate interagency trail connectivity, practices and policies, signage, and network.
- 5.2.2 Develop a trail maintenance plan.
- 5.2.3 Develop a multi-year plan to implement priority trail projects as identified in adopted trail plans.
- 5.2.4 Develop work plans for the implementation of the Emerald Necklace, Compton Creek, San Jose Creek, LA River, Altadena Crest Trail, Castaic, and Santa Susanna trail plans.
- 5.2.5 Develop intra-trail mapping and signage for Kenneth Hahn, Whittier Narrows, Bonelli, Schabarum, Castaic, and Santa Fe Dam regional parks.

5.3 Increase shade equity and expand tree canopy and the urban forest

ACTIONS

- 5.3.1 Complete the departmentwide tree inventory.
- 5.3.2 Develop a tree reforestation initiative prioritizing low canopy in high and very high need park communities.
- 5.3.3 Update the Department's Urban Forestry Management Plan and ensure alignment with the County's Urban Forest Management Plan.

5.4 Sustainably manage natural resources to support climate resiliency and biodiversity

ACTIONS

- 5.4.1 Update and expand the department's design guidelines to include urban biodiversity, climate resiliency, tree-canopy, stormwater management, and a climate-appropriate plant palette.
- 5.4.2 Manage water resources in the face of climate change impacts through smart irrigation, stormwater management, preventative maintenance, water conservation and reuse, plant selection, and landscape management.
- 5.4.3 Expand energy-efficient technologies to reduce carbon footprint and energy use.
- 5.4.4 Transition to all-electric equipment for leaf blowers and other mandated equipment by 2024, in accordance with state mandate AB 1346.
- 5.4.5 Expand extreme heat-related adaptation measures at park facilities, like cooling centers using gymnasiums and pools or hydration stations, in the County's areas most vulnerable to heat-related climate risks.

5.5 Preserve and celebrate historic and cultural resources

ACTIONS

- 5.5.1 Formalize partnerships with First Peoples to explore opportunities for historic acknowledgement, stewardship, and co-management of land.
- 5.5.2 Include historically inclusive, eco-literate, and multilingual interpretive signage at parks, including natural areas and nature centers.
- 5.5.3 Include interpretive signage as part of capital project sites with historic, cultural, or natural resources.
- 5.5.4 Develop a foundation document for each natural area to guide the interpretive program with continuous evaluation.

5.6 Maintain quality, clean, and safe parks

ACTIONS

- 5.6.1 Update and implement the grounds maintenance manual.
- 5.6.2 Develop a park asset inventory and management plan to support Maximo asset management platform
- 5.6.3 Build out the Maximo 2.0 asset management platform to serve as a work order program for maintenance, deferred maintenance, and capital projects.
- 5.6.4 Establish a deferred maintenance program and budget for the department.
- 5.6.5 Work with the Chief Executive Office to update Quimby fee schedule.





Goal #6:

ADVANCE ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Context

DPR serves the most populous and diverse County in the nation that deserves excellent services and amenities. With expected increases in park visitors and program participants, our Department must function transparently, efficiently, and with an eye toward an equitable future. To keep staff, community members, and external stakeholders apprised of ongoing initiatives, we must accessibly and effectively communicate with and listen to internal and external partners. Drawing upon lessons from budget challenges during the 2008 recession and the COVID-19 pandemic, we are looking to improve the transparency and sustainability of our long-term budgeting. A sustainable budget ensures adequate resources for mission-driven programs and builds community trust. Finally, leveraging data and implementing new technologies at parks ensures we are modernizing with equity front and center. Using data strategies to support planning and business operations will improve organizational performance, allowing us to achieve this Plan’s goals more quickly. Technologies such as improved public-facing web portals and expanded Wi-Fi access in parks will provide needed digital infrastructure upgrades and improve our responsiveness to community needs.

Impact

Seizing opportunities to advance organizational excellence is a key component in enhancing our role as a leading parks and recreation organization. External communication can position us as an equity leader in the minds of community members and relevant stakeholders. In FY2020-21, we sent out 16 press releases and over 3,200 social media posts. We logged over 14,600 social media engagements and 1.5 million website engagements.⁵⁷ Actions detailed in this plan describe how our communication can improve through increased language accessibility, outreach methods, and data management and dissemination.

Equity, Diversity, Cohesion, & Inclusion Commitment

Our commitment to equity in organizational excellence includes marketing to and engagement with people who may have limited park access because of barriers in language, technology, and/or other factors. Action 6.2.3 “Develop a departmentwide marketing and engagement plan to strengthen access to programs and services for hard-to-reach populations” will build bridges to underserved communities throughout LA County. Creating accessible and deliberate engagement efforts ensures those most in need are aware of and can access our breadth of programs, services, and amenities.

We are also committed to bridging the digital divide in LA County. Ensuring access to free Wi-Fi and computer centers at parks is an important way to meet this goal. Action 6.5.5 “Upgrade and expand Wi-Fi access in parks, prioritizing bridging the gap in digital divide communities” is an equity-centered approach to upgrading and expanding digital infrastructure at park facilities.



STRATEGIES

6.1 Strengthen internal communications

ACTIONS

- 6.1.1 Design and distribute a department newsletter.
- 6.1.2 Develop a structure of meetings to increase internal department communications:
 1. Monthly Division meetings
 2. Monthly Core Area meetings
 3. Monthly Deputy Director / Regional Operations Manager meetings
 4. Quarterly Supervisor, Manager, and Division Head meetings
 5. Annual State of the Department Meeting for all permanent staff
- 6.1.3 Develop an online platform to serve and support employees.

6.2 Strengthen external communications and broaden engagement

ACTIONS

- 6.2.1 Increase number of translated languages for multi-language marketing and outreach materials to reduce barriers to engagement.
- 6.2.2 Finalize the Department’s graphic style guide to include templates for use by staff.
- 6.2.3 Develop a departmentwide marketing and engagement plan to strengthen access to programs and services for hard-to-reach populations.
- 6.2.4 Promote the department’s website as a hub for:
 - Park programs, services, amenities, and events
 - Information on capital project plans, timelines, and status
- 6.2.5 Use innovative multimedia tools to increase reach and engagement to the Department’s social media platforms.
- 6.2.6 Using Qualtrics, establish a customer relationship management system to communicate with park users and community stakeholders to evaluate programming.

6.3 Enhance budget transparency

ACTIONS

- 6.3.1 Develop a 5-year forecast that projects out future financial needs to build awareness and support fiscal sustainability.
- 6.3.2 Review and update the cost-recovery policy and procedure and hold a departmentwide training.
- 6.3.3 Establish a park budget per park that outlines staffing, services, and supplies.
- 6.3.4 Establish a training program for supervisors and managers to understand and manage their program and division budgets.

6.4 Invest in data and research

ACTIONS

- 6.4.1 Convene an internal working group to align data intake, processing, and use procedures across divisions (recreation, planning & development, operations) and platforms (Qualtrics, ActiveNet, Maximo, etc.), develop best practices to support Performance Counts and budget planning, and establish benchmarks.
- 6.4.2 Develop a comprehensive data business management strategy to establish protocols for data-informed decision-making.
- 6.4.3 Develop a “data warehouse” – a central repository of internal operations data – to inform decision making and budget requests.
- 6.4.4 Develop an internal dashboard to display and provide internal operations data in a clear way to inform decision making and budget requests.
- 6.4.5 Create a comprehensive GIS system with improved software and hardware to ensure accurate and consistently updated data for the Department.

6.5 Expand use of technology to improve park user experience

ACTIONS

- 6.5.1 Use new technologies and update our systems to enhance our organizational performance and public accountability, conduct data-informed analysis, and streamline public-facing systems (e.g., ActiveNet, Qualtrics, Rate-Your-Park, Maximo).
- 6.5.2 Implement automated parking solutions and online parking registration for regional parks and special events.
- 6.5.3 Implement Maximo 2.0 asset management platform to strengthen work order procedures and improve budgeting.
- 6.5.4 Invest in the completion of Documentum as a document management solution.
- 6.5.5 Upgrade and expand Wi-Fi access in parks, prioritizing bridging the gap in digital divide communities.
- 6.5.6 Explore technological upgrades, such as keyless entry infrastructure.

6.6 Ensure that policies and procedures align with the Business and Operations Plan

ACTIONS

- 6.6.1 Establish a 5-year review and update cycle for all department policies and procedures that includes research and benchmarking against comparable municipalities.
- 6.6.2 Develop a training program for staff on policies and procedures.
- 6.6.3 Create a page on the internal employee platform (Action 6.1.3) that includes all updated policies and procedures.
- 6.6.4 Restructure the policy and procedure committee membership to include members in core program areas.



APPENDIX A: FOCUS ON EQUITY: PLANNING EFFORTS & INITIATIVES

The following plans and programs are some of our key initiatives to address systemic social, racial, gender-based, and environmental inequity across LA County.

PLAN: Parks Needs Assessment (2016) & Park Needs Assessment Plus (PNA+) (2022)

The 2016 Countywide Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment (PNA) was a historic undertaking to engage all of Los Angeles County in a collaborative process to quantify the magnitude of park needs in unincorporated communities and cities across Los Angeles County. The plan also measured the potential cost of meeting that need.⁵⁸ The PNA accomplished this by establishing a groundbreaking suite of metrics that moved beyond the standard measure of park acreage per 1,000 residents. The PNA also incorporated pedestrian walkshed access and population density to accurately measure a community's park needs. This analysis, alongside an extensive community engagement process, created master lists of priority projects, deferred maintenance, and specialized facilities. The PNA also informed the development of the Los Angeles County Safe, Clean Neighborhood Parks and Beaches Measure of 2016 (Measure A) which generates about \$95 million of revenue annually and has dedicated funding allocations for park investment in high-and very high-need areas. The PNA is regularly updated; at the time of writing, the 2022 PNA+ (formerly referred to as the Regional and Rural Edition) is being completed to identify and address regional recreation, rural recreation, and conservation and restoration needs. The 2022 PNA+ was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 6, 2022 and specifically addresses land conservation and restoration, regional recreation, and rural recreation needs.

INITIATIVE: Women + Girls Initiative

Women and girls are differently impacted by the County's policies, programs, services, and actions (LA County Women + Girls Strategic Plan, 2018). In response to LA County's Women + Girls Initiative, DPR established a Women + Girls Advisory Committee to support and carry out the objectives of the Initiative agency-wide. DPR established an annual Women + Girls Workplan with specific steps to advance gender equity. DPR is committed to advancing gender equity by 1) reviewing and improving our internal hiring, recruitment, training, and evaluation practices; and 2) identifying recreational and programmatic opportunities to foster optimal development in women and girls through sports and other recreational programs.

PLAN: Business and Operations Plan

The Business and Operations Plan was envisioned by our Department leadership as a way to continue building a resilient mission-driven organization while emphasizing strategic thinking and data management to drive future decision-making.⁵⁹ Adopting a DEI and anti-racist framework for operating our Department will ensure access to programs and caring staff, where all people, especially those living in

Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and Asian American communities can experience the health benefits uniquely afforded by participating in parks and recreation activities.⁶⁰ Remaining relevant during and post-COVID-19 by evolving to meet today's recreational, business, and operational needs and societal realities means we must be intentional about having a defined resource allocation philosophy that is transparent and embedded in all aspects of day-to-day operations. To this end, DEI and anti-racism are woven into every aspect of daily operations and are core leadership competencies. A process improvement cycle of plan, do, revise, and review supports our Department in becoming a learning organization that strives towards innovative approaches to its operations, core recreation programs, and business functions while remaining at the forefront of improving societal conditions through mission, vision, and core values. Equally important is alignment towards County initiatives such as the LA County Strategic Plan, Women + Girls, Alternatives to Incarceration, Pathways for Economic Resiliency, Center for Health Equity, the Office of Violence Prevention, and OurCounty Sustainability to name a few. Finally, equity programming is balanced with a focus on revenue by capturing new and returning visitors and remaining a premier recreation destination. Locating new streams of revenue through core program and partnership agreements, specialty rentals, sports tourism, special events, the re-launch of Parks and Recreation Foundation, and independent contract classes, are just a few new investments we are embarking on to rebuild, sustain, and eventually grow in the coming years. Our Business and Operations Plan is intended to serve as a roadmap to reimagining operations so that DPR remains at the forefront of innovative programming, services, and amenities that amplify human potential.

PLAN: 30x30 County Vision

The federal 30x30 initiative establishes a national goal to conserve at least 30 percent of lands and coastal waters by the year 2030 to fight climate change and advance biodiversity and conservation. The PNA+ is Los Angeles County's 30x30 plan that reimagines conservation to include both traditional efforts to acquire and protect natural lands, as well as the strategic restoration of degraded lands in vulnerable and environmentally burdened communities.

As part of PNA+, we have identified areas that should be prioritized for conservation and restoration. Conservation areas include lands that offer the most environmental benefits for species diversity, significant habitats, habitat connectivity, proximity to bodies of water, and habitat types. Areas prioritized for restoration or parkland conversion are in communities that have the most environmental burdens such as groundwater threat, hazardous waste, poor air quality, and pollution burden. Moving forward, we will update our parkland acquisition strategy based on the findings of the PNA and PNA+ Final Reports to collaborate with national, state, and local agencies and conservancies on regional parkland initiatives.

PROGRAMS: Everybody Plays

Everybody Plays provides LA County youth with free access to recreational programs and equipment while visiting their local parks. We are collaborating with twenty local cities to support youth and families by providing free drop-in after-school programming and nutritional snacks at qualifying park sites.⁶¹ Developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program serves as a safe haven that connects youth to caring recreation staff and their peers in green spaces and natural environments. The program is estimated to reach over 350,000 youth in 2021-22.⁶²

PROGRAMS: Parks After Dark

Parks After Dark (PAD) is a community cohesion and violence prevention program that provides free activities and resources for all ages during the summer.⁶³ We lead this program with support from our County partners including the Chief Executive Office, Department of Public Social Services, the Board of Supervisors, and community-based

organizations throughout Los Angeles County. Over thirty participating parks stay open late to provide sports and cultural programming, events, classes, and resource fairs during summer evening hours, when crime rates are the highest and youth have fewer social and recreational opportunities.⁶⁴ Before the pandemic, PAD averaged approximately 380,000 participants throughout the season.⁶⁵

Workforce: Lifeguard Ready Training

The Lifeguard Ready Training (LRT) program is a no-cost education and training program for diverse youth ages 16-24 to begin their pathway to becoming a Los Angeles County Swimming Pool Lifeguard.⁶⁶ The LRT enables participants to join the County Pool Lifeguard Training Academy as Pool Lifeguard candidates. The program is expected to serve over nine hundred youth participants in 2021-22.⁶⁷

We are committed to expanding our diverse workforce and developing lifeguards from the communities we serve. Belvedere Aquatic Center in East Los Angeles and the Jesse Owens Park and Roosevelt Park Pools in South Los Angeles are key recruitment areas for this program. Diverse and systems-involved youth are encouraged to apply for the training program. In the event trainees are unable to reach the required level for lifeguard testing, they are tapped into the Parks employment system and encouraged to advance into other recreational career opportunities with our Department.

Workforce: Youth@Work

Through the Youth@Work program, DPR partners with the Workforce Development Aging and Community Services Department (WDACS) to provide entry-level work experiences to local youth ages 14-24 with a pathway to County employment. Youth workers assist DPR staff in a variety of park and nature center operations. Additionally, the program helps youth with resume development, hands-on job training, interview coaching, and application to LA County career positions.⁶⁸ Youth@Work prioritizes underserved populations such as foster youth, unhoused individuals, recipients of CalFRESH, CalWORKs, and General Relief, individuals with disabilities, and the re-entry population; more than half of program participants received some form of supportive services. Since July 2021, over 450 youth have received employment through this partnership and new participants are joining the program daily.¹⁸

FUNDING: Measure A

In November 2016, Los Angeles County voters approved Measure A, the Safe, Clean Neighborhood Park, Open Space, Beaches, River Protection, and Water Conservation Measure. The goal of Measure A was to ensure parks, open spaces, beaches, and waterways were built and protected for future generations.⁶⁹ Informed by the 2016 Parks Needs Assessment, Measure A uses the "High" and "Very High" need definitions to earmark a set amount of grant funding for park projects, maintenance, and planning efforts in these high-need areas.

While the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District (RPOSD) is responsible for administering Measure A, DPR plays a crucial role in the development of the measure through the findings of the PNA and the implementation of allocation and competitive grant funds.

ONGOING PROCESS: Indigenous History & Land Acknowledgment Statement

Our Department acknowledges the importance of uplifting the true history of the lands now known as Los Angeles County. Inequitable access to County-owned lands for the region's American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) population has negatively impacted their physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, and cultural health. Tribal engagement at the local level is critical

to the development and maintenance of equitable and culturally just policies and procedures to improve access to parks, beaches, recreational waters, public lands, and public spaces and ensure AIAN community members can observe cultural, traditional, and religious practices.

We collaborate with tribal groups on increasing the use and visibility of Indigenous languages at our facilities for educational uses, such as sharing information on Traditional Ecological Knowledge, developing content for cultural interpretive signs, and partnering on large special events such as the Day at the Rocks, and a Day in Nature. We maintain an open dialogue regarding indoor and outdoor exhibits depicting the cultural history of the tribes to ensure accurate representation and preservation of culture. Additionally, we partner with tribal communities and provide staffing, resources, facilities, and outdoor space to support tribal educational programs such as in-service training, interpretive programs, children's camps, and more.

We are also intentional about collaborating with tribes as stakeholders. We engaged over 30 Native American tribes for the PNA+ process. We collaborated with the California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (NAIC), Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples, United American Indian Involvement, Inc. (UAI), and other Indigenous-led, community-based organizations to conduct extensive outreach.

Finally, the County embarked on a process in Fall 2021 to gather input that will update its understanding of the region's Indigenous history and the harms perpetuated against the AIAN community to advance truth, healing, and transformation, and inform the development of a formal land acknowledgment for the County. The County anticipates completing the development of the formal land acknowledgment by the end of 2022.⁷⁰

Related Efforts: County of Los Angeles Executive Office of the Board of Supervisors' 2017-2021 Strategic Plan

Our Strategic Plan is in dialogue with the County of Los Angeles Executive Office of the Board of Supervisors' 2017-2021 Strategic Plan. Developed in 2016, the County's Strategic Plan helps ensure a nexus between departmental efforts and its six Board-Directed Priorities.⁷¹ The County's Strategic Plan establishes a common vision and set of goals that all the County Departments will follow to ensure the County is fostering meaningful impact for all communities. The goals and strategies in this Plan align with the countywide goals to "Make Investments That Transform Lives, Foster Vibrant, and Resilient Communities, and Realize Tomorrow's Government Today."⁷²



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⁶⁸ LA County AJCC, CA. Youth@Work (ages 14-24). (n.d.). <https://www.ajcc.lacounty.gov/job-seekers/population-specific-placement-services/youth-work-ages-14-24>

⁶⁹ RPOSD. (2022, April 20). Introducing Measure A. <https://rposd.lacounty.gov/timeline/introducing-measure-a/>

⁷⁰ Please visit lanaic.lacounty.gov to learn more.

⁷¹ Los Angeles County Executive Office. (2016). The County of Los Angeles 2016-2021 Strategic Plan. http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/dpr/032778_LAP&RStrategicPlan_English.pdf

⁷² Los Angeles County. (2022, June 1) Strategic plan and goals. <https://ceo.lacounty.gov/strategic-plan-and-goals/>

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